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ABSTRACT

The Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020 initiative brought together a diverse group of people from across the nation to create a new vision for agriculture education. The group envisioned a system of agricultural education beginning in early childhood and continuing throughout life. The group examined agricultural education's heritage and resolved to take a proactive stance in planning its future. The mission formulated will prepare students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resource systems. The following goals were established: (1) an abundance of highly motivated, well-educated teachers in all disciplines, pre-kindergarten through adult, will provide agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resources education; (2) agricultural education leaders will provide instruction in the review, selection, adaptation, and use of appropriate educational technologies and teaching strategies to address the changing education environment; (3) all students will be conversationally literate in agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resources systems; and (4) partnerships and strategic alliances will ensure continuous education about agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resources systems. (The initiative's 36 steering committee and consortium leaders are listed.) (MN)

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A New Era in Agriculture

Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020

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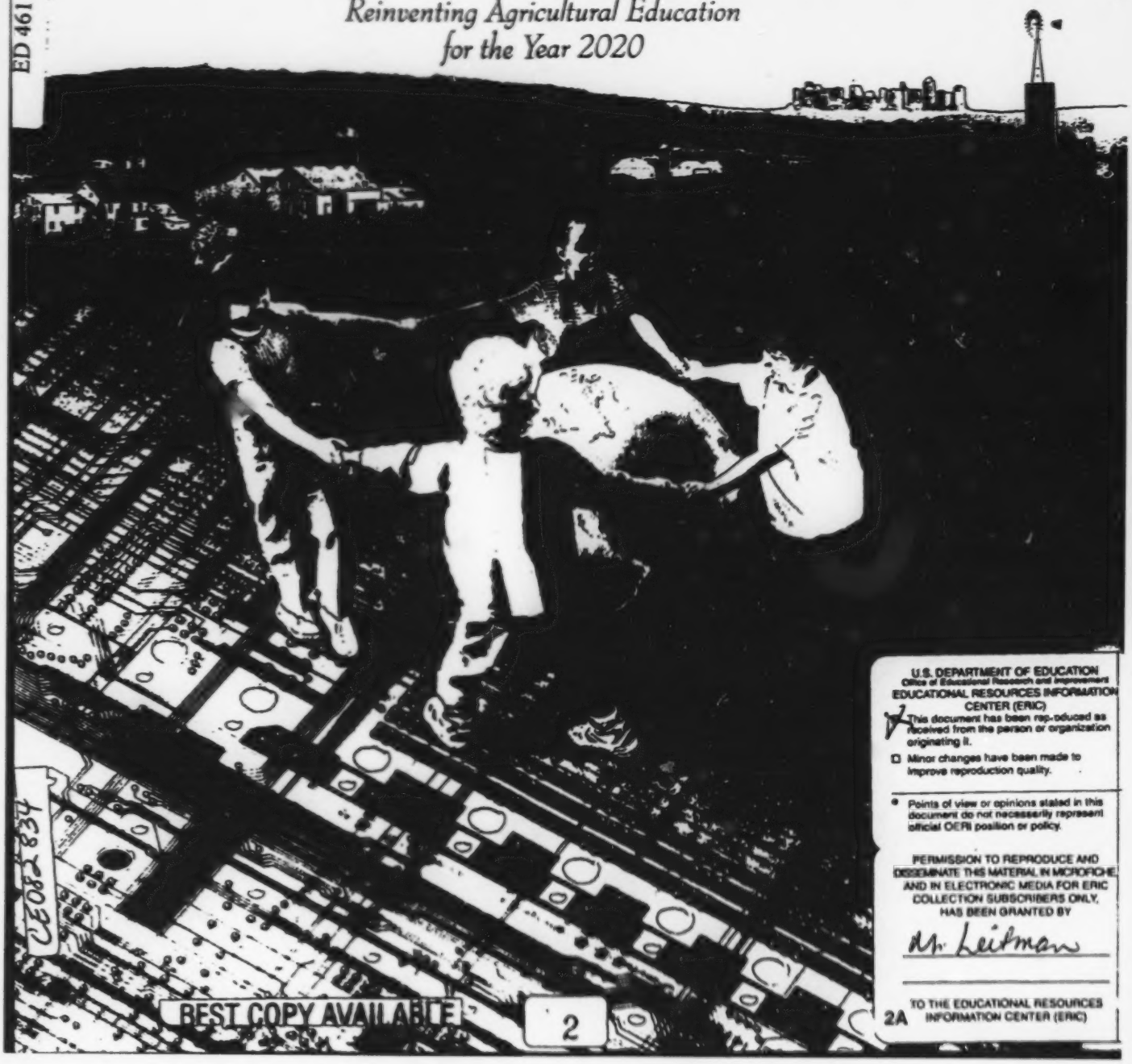

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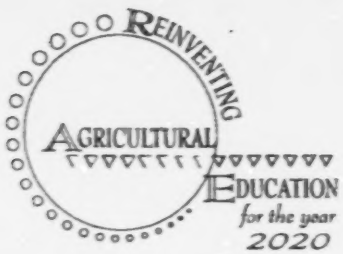

Preamble

Agricultural education encompasses food, fiber, agriculture, natural resources and related systems.

As we stand poised on the threshold of a new millennium, envision a world in which all people are well-fed, healthy and more prosperous than ever before. For centuries, people throughout the world have aspired to a high quality of life, and education has long been the principal tool needed to achieve those aspirations.

Just as education provides the vehicle to move us toward prosperity, agriculture provides the foundation we need to survive and prosper—through an abundant, nutritious, safe food supply and a healthy, sustainable environment.

Through the Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020 initiative, a diverse group of people from across the nation had the opportunity to shape the future and meet the fundamental needs of society by creating a new vision for agricultural education. The system they envisioned begins in early childhood and continues throughout life.

Rather than reacting to change as it comes, the participants in this initiative took a proactive stance and looked ahead to develop a shared vision of their preferred future.

Agricultural education's strong heritage provides a solid foundation on which to build. Lessons learned from the past—such as the need to expand curricula to serve a more diverse student population—have provided valuable insight for the future. The work begun in this initiative prepares us to deal effectively with changes in food production, environmental stewardship, human health, technology and the global economy.

As a result of the Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020 initiative, a new vision, mission and goals were developed for agricultural education. The vision expressed herein relates to the future of agricultural education on a global scale, whereas the mission has a more narrow focus and is written specifically for the school-based agricultural education community. Both statements apply to a national system of agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources education. The goals

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and objectives establish a strategic direction for the future.

"Agriculture" and "agricultural education" are broad, encompassing terms. The new vision for agricultural education employs the phrase "agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems" to describe this very broad field. The National Research Council has defined it as a field that encompasses "the production of agricultural commodities, including food, fiber, wood products, horticultural crops, and other plant and animal products. The terms include the financing, processing, marketing and distribution of agricultural products; farm production supply and service industries; health, nutrition and food consumption; the use and conservation of land and water resources; development and maintenance of recreational resources; and related economic, sociological, political, environmental, and cultural characteristics of the food and fiber system."[1]

To achieve our vision and mission, we must engage in a global social contract to serve the needs of society, improve the quality of the environment, build leadership and collaboration, and develop new approaches to new challenges.

We must engage in a global social contract to serve the needs of society.

Vision

Agricultural education envisions a world where all people value and understand the vital role of agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems in advancing personal and global well-being.

Mission

Agricultural education prepares students for successful careers and a lifeti.ne of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems.

1 National Research Council in *Understanding Agriculture: New Directions for Education*, 1988.

Goals

GOAL 1

An abundance of highly motivated, well-educated teachers in all disciplines, pre-kindergarten through adult, provide agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems education.

Objectives

- Agricultural education leaders ensure a sufficient quantity of qualified agriculture teachers who represent the demographics of the nation.
- Preparation programs for all elementary, secondary and adult teachers integrate instruction in agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems.
- Agricultural education leaders provide relevant instructional leadership and professional development opportunities for themselves and for all teachers.
- Teacher preparation programs rely on the most current and broadly representative research for developing curriculum and courses of study.
- Partnerships of leaders in agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems education, industry and government provide diverse learning experiences to ensure that school administrators and counselors are aware of the broad career opportunities available in agriculture.
- Agricultural education leaders provide instruction in the review, selection, adaptation and use of appropriate educational technologies and teaching strategies to address the changing education environment.

Today only six percent of the high school population successfully completes coursework in agriculture.

GOAL 2

All students have access to seamless, lifelong instruction in agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems through a wide variety of delivery systems and educational settings.

Objectives

- Collaboration among educators and educational entities ensure students benefit from educational effectiveness and efficiency.
- All students, in urban, suburban and rural schools have access to high quality agricultural education programs.
- Prepare students for successful careers in global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems.
- Every agriculture student has opportunities for experiential learning and leadership development.
- Agricultural education instructional systems and materials provide for diverse learning styles.
- Student enrollments in agricultural education represent the diversity of the school-age population.

GOAL 3

All students are conversationally literate in agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems.

Objectives

- Agriculture teachers encourage cross-curricular course development and instructional collaboration with teachers in all disciplines.
- All teachers include elements of agriculture in a relevant, integrated instructional approach.
- Agriculture teachers collaborate with other groups to bring factual information about agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems to all students.

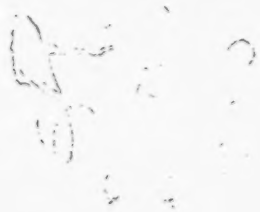
GOAL 4

Partnerships and strategic alliances ensure a continuous presence of education in and about agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems.

Objectives

- Positive working relationships with multiple stakeholders build lines of communication and provide a diverse workforce for the agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources industries.
- Broad-based coalitions of groups and organizations collaborate to develop and disseminate contemporary agriculture curricula for all students.
- Partnerships and strategic alliances provide strong support for agricultural education.
- Numerous and varied stakeholders, inside and outside the school system, engage in a continuing effort to strengthen and refine the shared vision, mission and goals.

Tomorrow all students will achieve conversational literacy of agriculture and have access to life-long instruction.



Background

Agriculture students can choose courses in food science, entrepreneurship, world trade, horticulture, emerging techologies, aquaculture and many other subjects.

School-based agricultural education in the United States became a federal initiative in 1917, primarily as a measure to help ensure the nation's food supply. Additional legislation strengthened agricultural education by broadening the curriculum beyond production agriculture and enhancing the role of student organizations, such as the FFA.

The school-based agricultural education community fostered by these legislative actions consists of student, professional and institutional affiliations. School-based agricultural education provides instruction for middle school, secondary, postsecondary and adult students via classroom and laboratory instruction, practical field applications and participation in student leadership organizations. In addition to production agriculture, students can choose courses in food science, entrepreneurship, environmental science, biotechnology, turf management, global agribusiness, floriculture, aquaculture and many other subjects.

On January 1, 1996, the National Council for Agricultural Education inaugurated Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020 (RAE 2020), an initiative to reposition and strengthen agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems education for the 21st century.

The primary objective of RAE 2020 was to establish a shared, vision for the future of school-based agricultural education leading to a strategic plan designed for long-term implementation. This ongoing process has been conducted at national, state and local levels. The initiative was designed to cause meaningful change in agricultural education programs and to reinforce the success of those programs by making the necessary adjustments to sustain agricultural education for the future.

TODAY'S AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION COMMUNITY

- Agricultural Education Division of the Association for Career and Technical Education
- American Association for Agricultural Education (university teacher educators)
- National Association of Agricultural Educators (agriculture teachers)
- National Council for Agricultural Education
- National Association of Supervisors of Agricultural Education (state leaders)
- National FFA Alumni Association
- National FFA Foundation, Inc.
- National FFA Organization
- National Postsecondary Agricultural Student Organization
- National Young Farmer Educational Association (agriculture producers)

ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

RAE 2020 required input from diverse sources, and The Council solicited ideas and suggestions from many individuals and groups. The effort opened lines of communication among agricultural education professionals, members of agriculture and education organizations, and individuals and organizations not traditionally involved with school-based agricultural education, but who hold a stake in these programs.

Across the country, agribusiness and natural resources professionals, school administrators, school board members and government agencies met with agricultural educators to contribute to a shared vision. By consulting with external stakeholders, agricultural education drew from experiences outside the profession and is now beginning to reap the benefits of working toward a common vision with groups that hold similar, vested interests.

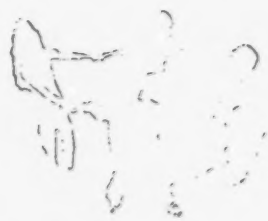
THE PROCESS

Through three phases—visioning, strategic planning and implementation—RAE 2020 enabled participants in national, regional, state and local groups to develop the types of agricultural education programs needed to meet future demands.

The first phase–visioning–employed a process to develop a **preferred future** for agricultural education. In the second phase, participants designed and implemented a strategic planning process to develop innovative initiatives to move toward their vision of the preferred future. The third phase empowered participants to implement initiatives developed in their strategic planning efforts.

State agricultural education leaders, along with agricultural and food systems stakeholders at all levels of business, education, agriculture and government, worked in 11 regional consortia of states to implement this initiative with regional, state and local groups. Each consortium of states worked through the three phases of the initiative.

Across the nation, 47 states and two territories participated in the initiative, and more than 10,000 individuals met as a result of RAE 2020.



The Challenge

Across the nation, 47 states and two territories participated in RAE 2020, and more than 10,000 individuals met as a result of the initiative. Many of these meetings were held in local communities where discussions centered on local needs of agricultural education.

The RAE 2020 initiative has provided agricultural education professionals the opportunity to create their own future as the profession stands poised at a defining moment. Will we choose to accept the challenge laid before us? To meet agricultural education's vision that "...all people value and understand the vital role of agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems in advancing personal and global well-being," agricultural educators—working in concert with other partners—must develop dynamic plans to address the goals and objectives identified through the RAE 2020 initiative.

The profession stands poised at a defining moment. Will we choose to accept the challenge laid before us?

The mission for school-based agricultural education of preparing "...students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems," encompasses both students enrolled in agriculture courses and those who receive instruction about agriculture in other courses and settings.

Will "tomorrow's agricultural education community" find new ways to recruit and develop teachers? Will we develop more efficient and effective ways to open the doors of the agricultural education profession to talented people with diverse experiences and educational backgrounds? To ensure that highly motivated, well-educated teachers provide quality education for students, agricultural education must first ensure the number of teachers qualified to teach agriculture courses meets the global demand. In recent years, the nation has experienced an increasing deficit of agriculture teachers, as well as teachers in other subject areas. We must take all necessary measures to increase the number of qualified teachers available to teach agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems.

Will we broaden our programs and accept the challenge of educating all learners about agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems? All students—in urban, suburban, and rural schools—should have access to high-quality programs of instruction in agriculture through a wide variety of delivery methods and educational settings. Today, agricultural education programs serve more than 800,000 middle school, secondary, postsecondary and adult students throughout the 50 states and three U.S. territories (Puerto Rico, Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands).

Demographic records indicate agricultural education is attracting a more diverse student base. As student populations diversify, the

experiential component of agricultural education must adapt to the new student populations. Instructional methods and materials for agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems education must provide for diverse students and learning styles.

Will we work to help all students achieve conversational literacy in agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems? For all students to achieve conversational literacy, all teachers in the school must include the study of agriculture in a relevant, integrated instructional approach. Today, approximately six percent of the school population successfully completes coursework in agriculture. For the other 94 percent of students to have the knowledge required for a lifetime of informed choices in agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems, a broad-based network of teachers, groups and organizations must collaborate to develop and disseminate contemporary agriculture curricula for all students. We must work with educators in all schools and all university teacher preparation programs to infuse agriculture across the educational spectrum.

Will we form partnerships and strategic alliances with our stakeholders to ensure a continuous presence of agricultural education? Not only will these partnerships and strategic alliances ensure a continuous presence of education in and about agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems, but they also will strengthen the system of public and private support for agricultural education.

We have the opportunity to chart a new era in agricultural education. What will we do?

What will YOU do?

We have the opportunity to chart a new era in agricultural education.

"In our hands is the power to choose."

Stephen R. Covey

Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020

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